



Skills Funding
Agency

College and Training Organisation Survey 2015

A summary of the results

December 2015

Of interest to colleges, other training organisations, employers and other stakeholders.

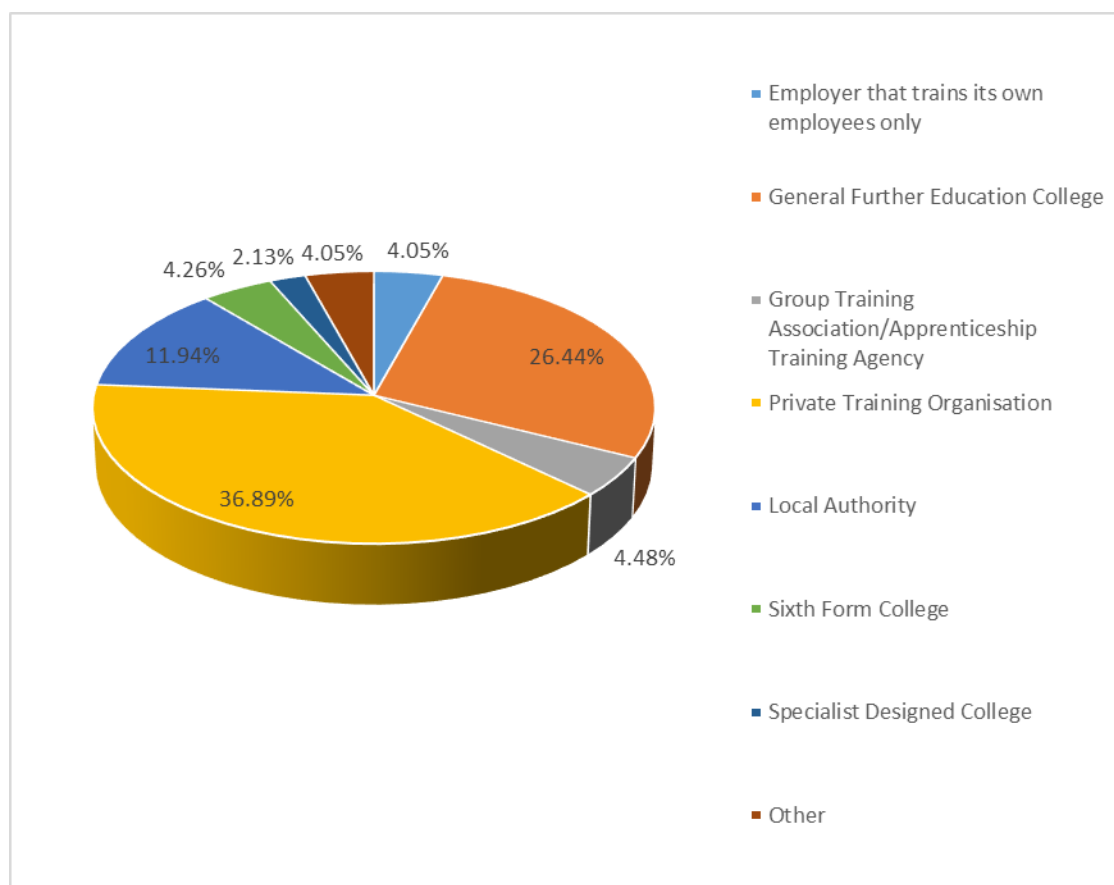
Background

The SFA's fifth annual college and training organisation survey took place from Monday, 29 June to Friday, 17 July (inclusive).

This year we received **469** responses (2014: 594 responses), representing approximately **43%** of the total number of colleges and other training organisations on our database (2015: 1,093). Again, this year we only invited these organisations to participate in the survey. Some **97%** of respondents confirmed they held a contract with the SFA at the time of completing the survey.

This year's survey statements remained broadly similar to last year's; however, we changed some slightly to reflect updates or changes to our systems and processes. For example, we introduced **three new statements** this year relating to the Hub, the Service Desk and our website on GOV.UK.

Table 1: Respondents by 'type' based on **469** responses.



The '**other**' category in Table 1 includes academies, employers with more than 5,000 employees, organisations with fewer than 5,000 employees, higher education organisations, limited liability partnerships and national colleges.

Survey Summary Results

Although there were fewer respondents than last year, the **approval ratings** in the following **three areas** increased significantly in comparison:

- i. 'Actions we have taken to improve over the last 12 months.'
(8.46% increase.)
- ii. 'Information and data we provide.'
(7.27% increase.)

- iii. The 'Register of Training Organisations.'
(5.59% increase.)

The term 'approval rating' refers to the combined percentage score of 'very good', 'good' and 'satisfactory' by respondents to each survey statement.

Given the reduced number of respondents, only **two areas** fell by approximately **5%**:

- i. 'National Apprenticeship Service.'
(5.84% decrease.)
- ii. 'Understanding SFA staff roles and responsibilities.'
(4.53% decrease.)

Summary of Detail

Respondents approved highly of the way we communicate with them: our ability to communicate free of jargon and in plain English, and the effectiveness of 'Update' (our core communication channel to the further education sector) received approval ratings of **91%** and **95%** respectively.

In terms of our core function, more than **84%** of respondents gave a positive approval rating to our effectiveness in funding FE skills training. Although this represents a slight decrease from the **87%** of respondents in last year's survey, it is equivalent in real terms given the reduced number of respondents.

More than **75%** of respondents approved of our actions since last year's survey to improve the way we operate with the FE sector (2014: 67%).

Some **74%** of respondents approved of the extent to which our funding rules have removed bureaucracy and simplified the funding system, which remains the same as last year. At the same time, **72%** approved of our progress in reducing the

bureaucratic burden on the sector through a streamlined funding system (2014: 69%).

Some **63%** of respondents approved of our progress in supporting employers and advertising apprenticeship vacancies. We cannot compare this directly to last year, since the statement differs slightly and it was aimed previously at the promotion of apprenticeships.

Some **67%** of respondents approved of the ease with which they can navigate our website on GOV.UK and find information.

For our three new survey statements, we received an approval rating of **77%** for the effectiveness of the Hub, **66%** for the Service Desk and **67%** for our website on GOV.UK.

In relation to the National Careers Service, **37%** of respondents approved of its ability to engage organisations to ensure learners have access to the service (2014: 40%). Evidence from a range of sources including Ofsted inspections, ongoing customer satisfaction and mystery shopping research consistently comment positively on the National Careers Service's delivery to and engagement with its customers and stakeholders.

However, the findings of the annual college and training organisation survey suggests that there are issues around the visibility of the service, awareness of its impact, and that partners fully understand the role and value of the National Careers Service.

All National Careers Service contractors will be advised to prioritise partnership working with colleges to make improvements in these three areas over the next 12 months.

There was a decrease (4.53%) in the understanding SFA staff roles and responsibilities.' We will, over the coming year, look to provide clarity on our roles and responsibilities, in line with the Skills Funding Letter 2015 to 2016.

Headline Approval Ratings

- Nearly **96%** approved of the effectiveness of 'Update' – a consistently high approval rating.
- Around **91%** approved of the extent to which we write our communications in plain English – another high approval rating for the last two years.
- Over **85%** approved of the effectiveness of our role in funding FE skills training.
- Some **84%** approved of the information and data we produce.
- Nearly **78%** for respondents' understanding of the roles and responsibilities of SFA staff.
- Over **78%** approved of the success of the procurement process on the Register of Training Organisations.
- More than **75%** of respondents thought the actions we have taken over the last 12 months improved how we operate with them.
- Nearly **73%** approved of the extent to which our Funding Rules have removed bureaucracy and simplified the funding system.
- Over **72%** approved of the progress we have made to reduce the bureaucratic burden by streamlining the funding system.
- Nearly **67%** approved of the ease with which they can find information on our website.

- Only **63%** of respondents approved of the progress we have made supporting employers and advertising apprenticeship vacancies.

Survey Results

The figures for each statement below show the percentage of responses for each rating category.

Survey Statement and Rating Categories	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor	Don't Know
"Our effectiveness in our role of funding the government's priorities for skills training for further education in England."	6.27	37.59	40.60	10.53	3.26	1.75
"The extent to which the Funding Rules 2014 to 2015 (and evidence requirements) publication has helped to remove bureaucracy and provide greater simplification of the funding system for you."	3.76	26.07	43.36	16.04	8.02	2.76
"The progress we have made to reduce the bureaucratic burden on the sector by streamlining the funding system – particularly the funding rates, formula and earnings method."	2.76	23.81	45.61	17.79	7.52	2.51
"The extent to which the National Careers Service complements and supports your arrangements for providing high-quality careers information advice and guidance to your learners/trainees."	2.01	7.77	26.82	24.06	21.55	17.79

“The extent to which the National Apprenticeship Service assists you in supporting employers and advertising apprenticeship vacancies.”	3.76	21.30	38.35	14.04	8.02	14.54
“Your understanding of the roles and responsibilities of SFA staff with whom you interact.”	7.77	31.33	39.10	14.79	4.01	3.01
“The accuracy and quality of funding allocations.”	7.73	37.11	38.14	10.82	3.35	2.84
“The quality of the performance management rules to enable requests for growth to be submitted and clarity on how delivery will be reconciled.”	4.38	25.26	39.95	18.81	7.47	4.12
<p>“The extent to which the information and data we provide you (based on your data input):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is in a useful and open data format • enables you to make business decisions.” 	4.90	35.82	43.30	8.51	4.38	3.09
“The success of the procurement process we operate (through the Register of Training Organisations) to secure the right provision for learners and employers.”	3.61	29.12	45.36	8.51	4.12	9.28

“The effectiveness of the Hub as a place for sharing our funding and contracting documents with you.”	5.67	33.51	37.37	12.89	7.22	3.35
“The efficiency and effectiveness of the Service Desk in respect of responding to data/system related enquiries.”	6.44	22.16	36.86	17.01	7.22	10.31
“The effectiveness of ‘Update’, our weekly round-up of business-critical information and news for the sector, in communicating key information to you.”	23.58	52.59	19.17	1.55	0.52	2.59
“The extent to which our communications are written in plain English and free from unnecessary jargon.”	17.10	48.45	25.65	5.44	2.33	1.04
“The ease with which you can find the information you need on our website now we have moved to GOV.UK.”	4.66	20.21	41.71	20.21	10.36	2.85
“The actions we have taken over the last 12 months to improve the way we operate with you.”	3.43	21.64	50.13	13.72	4.75	6.33



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